

PHYSICIAN'S OPINION

Often, a physician's opinion is one of the most important pieces of evidence in a veteran's service-connected disability claim leading to a favorable rating decision. The following two paragraphs contain verbiage taken directly from the Board of Veterans Appeals, Washington D.C., which should be used as guidance by physicians when writing a medical opinion at the request of a veteran for his/her VA disability claim:

“In providing the opinions, it would be helpful if the examiners would use the following language as appropriate: ‘more likely than not’ (meaning a likelihood greater than 50%), ‘at least as likely as not’ (meaning a likelihood of at least 50%), or ‘less likely than not’ or ‘unlikely’ (meaning that there is a less than 50% likelihood).

The term ‘at least as likely as not’ does not mean within the realm of medical possibility. Rather, it means that the weight of medical evidence both for and against a conclusion is so evenly divided that it is as medically sound to find in favor of that conclusion as it is to find against it. **The examiner should provide a complete rationale for any opinion provided.**”